

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 666
By Shepard

A RESOLUTION to honor Dickson County, Tennessee on its
bicentennial celebration.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause in its deliberations to join with the citizens of the cities and counties that comprise this great State in celebrating joyous and historic occasions; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Dickson County are most assuredly deserving of special recognition, as they commemorate the county's bicentennial; and

WHEREAS, the first settlers traveled overland to the Mero District of the Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio in an expedition led by General James Robertson, arriving December 25, 1779, at French Lick, and were soon joined by Colonel John Donelson's party of women, children, and older men on April 24, 1780; and

WHEREAS, as Military General of the District, General Robertson was charged with the duty to maintain order, survey the territorial boundary lines and land grants, and settle disputes and make treaties with native Americans; and

WHEREAS, as a Surveyor, General Robertson discovered the rich iron ore deposits on the Western Highland Rim, and with William Sheppard, purchased two 640-acre tracts of land in 1793 on the middle fork of Barton's Creek in Tennessee County, North Carolina, and by 1795, established the Cumberland Iron Works, the first industrial complex and village to be located in the United States west of the Allegheny and Appalachian Mountains; and

WHEREAS, settlement of the area rapidly increased, and by 1803, the population was sufficient to organize a new County; and

WHEREAS, the First Session of the Fifth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, meeting in Knoxville, enacted Chapter LXVI of the Acts of Tennessee, 1803, on October 25, 1803, an act annexing part of Robertson and Montgomery counties into a separate and distinct county by the name of Dickson, so named in honor of Dr. William Dickson, a former Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives and a member of the United States Congress, representing the Nashville district; and

WHEREAS, the first meeting of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions met at the dwelling house of Colonel Robert Nesbitt on Barton's Creek on March 19 and 20, 1804, with the first Justices of the Peace being identified as Gabriel Allen, Montgomery Bell, Sterling Brewer, Jesse Craft, William Doak, Lemuel Harvey, Richard C. Napier, William Russell, and William Teas, with Robert Drake serving as Clerk Pro Tempore and Drury Christian as Sheriff Pro Tempore; and

WHEREAS, the first County officers were: Clerk, David Dickson; Sheriff, Benjamin Weakley; Register, James Walker; Commissioner of Revenue, Robert Drake; Trustee, John Larkin, Jr.; Wood Ranger, William Caldwell; Surveyor, James Fentress; County Solicitor, Nathaniel A. McNairy; and Coroner, John Hall; and

WHEREAS, the County Seat was established in 1804 at Charlotte, so named in honor of Charlotte Reeves Robertson, General James Robertson's wife; and

WHEREAS, standing at the crossroads of the major north-south and east-west stage routes, Dickson County grew as an important industrial and commercial center; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Supreme Court sat at Charlotte from 1817 to 1827; and

WHEREAS, Charlotte was Nashville's closest challenger as a site for the location of the State Capitol in 1842; and

WHEREAS, at the time of his death on April 1, 1855, Iron Master Montgomery Bell, was known as Tennessee's first industrialist, as he had purchased the Cumberland Iron Works from General Robertson in 1802, had provided cannon balls used by General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, and had cultivated the iron industry from western Kentucky to northern Alabama; and

WHEREAS, in the War Between the States, the area saw only minimal occupation and destruction and residually benefited from the completion of a railroad through the southern portion of the county, from Kingston Springs to the Tennessee River; and

WHEREAS, Agnes Anne Shipp was elected Superintendent of Public Schools in Dickson County in 1895, making her the first woman elected to public office in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dickson County was visited by socialist colonists who established the Ruskin Colony on Yellow Creek from 1895 to 1899; the colonists published *A Coming Nation*, a journal with world wide circulation that espoused socialist teachings and was the important organ that heralded the achievements and the ideals of the socialist society in America that guided the labor union movement near the turn of the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, Dickson County's tradition of excellence in education was led by Professor Robert E. Corlew, Sr., Superintendent of Schools for 25 of the first 30 years of the twentieth century, a leader who was cited by Governor Austin Peay as the one person who set an example that brought education in Tennessee into the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, Dickson native Frank G. Clement was one of Tennessee's finest governors who, during his three terms of office, presided over the organization of the nation's first

Department of Mental Health, the creation of the State's first speech and hearing center, the beginning of a long-range highway construction project including the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System, the initiation of the first state-sponsored industrial recruitment program, and the provision of free textbooks for school children, as well as becoming the first Tennessean to give a key-note address to a national political convention when he spoke to the 1956 Democratic National Convention; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Dickson County continues to be an industrial and commercial hub and is the home of the Cumberland Furnace Village Historic District; the Charlotte Courthouse Square Historic District, which includes the oldest courthouse still in use in Tennessee; Montgomery Bell State Park, which includes the Birthplace Shrine where the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination was founded in 1810; the Frank G. Clement Golf Course and Inn Convention Center; a vibrant downtown Dickson business district; and a wide array of industrial, commercial, and tourism-based businesses throughout the county; and

WHEREAS, Dickson County is also home to the Renaissance Center, a fine arts and technology learning center dedicated to providing quality educational and life-enrichment opportunities for all ages, that was created by the Jackson Foundation, Inc. with proceeds from the sale of Goodlark Hospital that had been founded in 1958 by Dr. L.C. Jackson, Dr. W.M. Jackson, and Dr. J.T. Jackson; and

WHEREAS, Dickson County is now comprised of the incorporated cities and towns of Burns, Charlotte, Dickson, Slayden, Vanleer, and White Bluff and has a population of approximately 44,000; and

WHEREAS, the County has appointed a Bicentennial Commission to plan and lead a celebration of Dickson County's past 200 years, to be commemorated from October 25, 2003 through May 1, 2004. The celebration will include an exhibition by the Tennessee State Museum, a Special Session of the Tennessee Supreme Court that will be held in Charlotte in March 2004, and public events on October 25, 2003, when *200 Years of Family*, a painting by

Michael Sloan, Tennessee's Artist-in-Residence from 1990 to 2000, will be unveiled; on March 20, 2004, when a monument will be dedicated on the Historic Courthouse Lawn in Charlotte; and on May 1, 2004, when the Old Timer's Day Parade will be held; and

WHEREAS, Dickson County is one of the great counties in Tennessee that has been a catalyst for positive change in our State and nation throughout its illustrious existence; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor this fine county and its citizenry as they commemorate this significant milestone in their historic existence; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and applaud the progress made by the dedicated citizens and leaders of Dickson County throughout the past 200 years, extending to them our best wishes for the county's every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.